

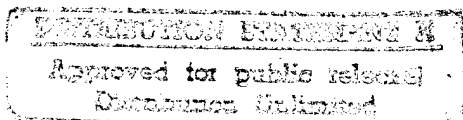
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.

The Reunification of Korea:  
Bringing Back the South

by

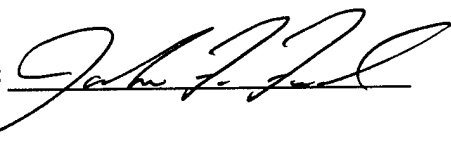
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CAPTAIN, U.S. NAVY



A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract of

THE REUNIFICATION OF KOREA:  
BRINGING BACK THE SOUTH

The extensive proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and of the means to deliver them is of international concern. On the Korean peninsula conventionally armed forces of the U.S. and the Republic of Korea face an adversary, the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK), who is suspected of having a limited arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and possibly the will to use them. How these weapons might be used to unify the Korean peninsula by the DPRK is unknown.

This challenge is reviewed from a non-U.S. and non-South Korean perspective. Hypothetical advice on employing the capabilities of these weapons is given to Kim Jung Il by a military advisor from the Peoples Republic of China. The specific advice highlights the potential of these weapons in relation to operational art and the principles of war.

Information gathered from unclassified sources on the capabilities of U.S. and South Korean forces, the potential effects of weapons of mass destruction, and the reported public positions of respective governments are used to form the basis for defeat by North Korean forces. It is time to consider the possibility.

## The Reunification of Korea: Bringing Back the South

### Introduction

The struggle for power within the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea [DPRK] continues with no obvious winner. Kim Jung Il the son of the late leader Kim Il Sung in his attempt to secure the role as leader of North Korea has requested advice from the Military Advisor to North Korea from the Peoples Republic of China [PRC]. The specific request asks, if DPRK forces can employ their limited arsenal of so-called Weapons of Mass Destruction [WMD] to successfully defeat the combined forces of South Korea and the United States. The WMD arsenal of North Korea is assumed to contain nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons with the means to employ them. This capability has yet to be demonstrated within the view of their Asian neighbors or confirmed conclusively by western intelligence assets. The advice from the PRC military advisor does not attempt to address engagement with conventional military forces as this area was not specifically requested. The subject of operational employment of North Korean forces is considered so politically sensitive within the context of the ongoing leadership struggle that requesting external advice in this area would be seen as a sign of weakness. The request for advice on employing WMD can also be potentially damaging to Kim Jung Il if discovered by others in the leadership struggle and is therefore couched in terms of an exercise in the following personal correspondence between these two men.

Dear Comrade Kim,

The government of the Peoples Republic of China has authorized me to assist you in any way possible to satisfy your request for "Warfare Exercise" planning advice on effectively employing Weapons of Mass Destruction as they apply to the current situation on the Korean peninsula. The discussion has been limited by excluding employment of conventional forces. My government has the greatest respect for and confidence in the professional capabilities of the Korean People's Army (KPA) and would not be so bold as to suggest how to employ these superb forces.

The historical examples on the use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons fail to clearly indicate that they were employed with knowledge or respect for the principles of war and operational art. Therefore, I have attempted to apply the wise guidance of the great Sun Tzu as well as western military authors in addressing why these weapons could be effectively used to achieve your strategic goal. This humble effort should not be addressed in the same breath as the teaching of Sun Tzu. However, it is hoped that you will find it adequate to stimulate thought as you pursue bringing all the people of Korea together again.

The government of the Peoples Republic of China views an alliance with a unified Korea to be essential to its objective of establishing a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Your expression of full support in promoting this objective is gratefully appreciated.

The following discussion responds to your specific request.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

The strategic goal of unifying the Korean peninsula, can be achieved through the use of weapons of mass destruction. The discussion of their use will follow the operational schemes of two courses of action (COA). One by a direct offensive attack on the south and the other via an indirect attack through covert actions. Each will be addressed separately detailing the specific employment of Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological weapons. Using concepts of operational art and principles of war, it will be demonstrated how the effects of these weapons can be the decisive factor to successful unification of the Korean peninsula.

#### **TIMING**

The American military is anticipating operations where WMD is employed and has recently begun to develop improved defensive measures to counter the effects of specifically chemical and biological weapons<sup>1</sup>. The important fact is that presently their capabilities leave them vulnerable<sup>2</sup>. These vulnerabilities can be exploited to undermine your enemy's center of gravity and are the key to your success.

#### **ENEMY FORCES**

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<sup>1</sup> Theresa Hitchens, "Legislation Would Reorder U.S. Chemical Warfare Priorities," Defense News, 15-21 April 1996, 12.

<sup>2</sup> R. Jeffery Smith, "Germ, Nuclear Arms Top Pentagon's List of Threats," Washington Post, 12 April 1996, 32; Tim Weiner, "U.S. Vulnerable to Terrorist Chemical Weapons," New York Times, 21 March 1996, 5.

The combined forces of the Republic of Korea (ROK) [650,000 personnel] and the U.S. [37,000 in Korea] are formidable even though DPRK forces at 1.2 million men have a numerical advantage. The Americans also have an operational reserve of 47,000 joint service personnel close by in Japan. These forces taken as a whole are his operational center of gravity.

Your opponent enjoys a mature theater with short lines of operation from both Korea and Japan. Similarly, the sea lines of communication and resupply are short with respect to Japan. However, without the ability to stage forces and supplies from Japan, these lines of operation and communication become long and extend outward from North America.

The relationship between Japan and the U.S. is a critical strength. The tie between the U.S. and South Korea can be attacked beyond your present efforts to undermine the UN Armistice<sup>3</sup>. The alliance between South Korea and the U.S. constitutes your opponents' strategic center of gravity. The alliance between the U.S. and Japan supports and strengthens both strategic and operational centers of gravity. This second alliance is vulnerable and if destroyed or undermined will significantly weaken both centers of gravity. "When he is unified, divide him" (Sun Tzu, The Art of War)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Nicholas D. Kristof, "North Korea's New Target: The Armistice," New York Times, 31 August 1995, A10.

<sup>4</sup> Sun Tzu, "The Art of War," trans. Samuel B. Griffith, New York: Oxford University Press, 1971, 69. Quoted from Michael Handel, Sun Tzu and Clausewitz: The Art of War and On War Compared.

The American forces have brought to the theater and shared with ROK forces the many advantages of modern highly technical equipment. They have fast and very capable command and control systems that communicate to and from the smallest unit in the field. Satellite positioning enables effective and rapid maneuver warfare and targeting. Reconnaissance satellites also reveal your force movements while infra-red satellites give missile launch warnings enabling an increasingly capable missile defense system. These capabilities are vulnerable.

The military forces of both ROK and U.S. are well trained. The U.S. forces enjoy the popular support of the people while the recent corruption scandals of former ROK military and political leaders have damaged the South Korean government support. These conditions can be exploited to create a vulnerability and the cumulative effects will further weaken the strategic and operational centers of gravity.

#### **COURSE of ACTION: DIRECT ATTACK**

This is the course of action most expected by your opponent and they have prepared extensively for it. Even with your numerical advantage, this course will not be without risk and will cause considerable destruction to the south and its economy. The cost of repairing large scale destruction would fall on the DPRK after unification and can be ill afforded. The actions proposed will help to minimize this destruction. The operation will begin with non-lethal operational fire with biologic weapon.



## BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

The biggest challenge in employing biological weapons is developing an effective means to disperse the agent when the warhead is delivered. To effect humans the agent must be aerosolized into particles sized between two and ten microns. This size has been determined best to reach into the lungs and is a difficult technical challenge to accomplish<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, a large proportion of the agent is destroyed when the weapon explodes limiting the effectiveness. To avoid this problem, using a biologic pathogen not targeted against military forces directly is proposed. A further advantage is the avoidance of an emotional public outrage expected with a biological attack<sup>6</sup>. The operational objective is to attack the unity between Japan and the U.S.

Operational security is essential to bring about the desired effect. Discovery will strengthen your opponents bond vice weaken it which is the objective. The attack will be delivered employing the concept non-lethal operational fire by your operatives, the Chosen Soren<sup>7</sup>, already in place inside Japan.

Their task will be to introduce the plant fungal pathogen, **rice blast**, by either dropping a contaminated bag of

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, Technologies Underlying Weapons of Mass Destruction, (Washington: 1993), 94-99.

<sup>6</sup> Edward M. Spiers. Chemical and Biological Weapons: A Study of Proliferation. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, 32.

American rice or a simple spray application onto the rice crops only in the vicinity of U.S. military installations and logistics nodes. The result will be crop losses of 70 to 80 percent<sup>8</sup>. The next phase begins as the disease progresses.

Systematic employment of psychological warfare activities bring national attention to the fact that this problem is only occurring near U.S. facilities and provide the link between the import of U.S. rice and the disease. Given the historic strength of the rice farmer in Japanese politics and the national dependence on rice, the reaction will make the U.S. problems on Okinawa with the rape of a school girl<sup>9</sup> seem minuscule in comparison. The outcome visualized would have the U.S. forces being required to purchase supplies locally which in turn will drive food prices skyward. The increased cost to the U.S. will cause Congress to question the need for continued forward presence in Japan. Higher market prices for the Japanese populace will also effect the Japanese economy which is still struggling to regain strength.

"Where the Army is, prices are high; when prices are high the wealth of the people is exhausted." (Sun Tzu, Art of War)<sup>10</sup>.

Additional psychological activities to enflame Japanese public opposition to continued U.S. presence and against the

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, Technologies Underlying WMD p. 80

<sup>9</sup> Steve Glain, "Closing U.S. Air Base Won't Stop Outcry," Wall Street Journal, 15 April 1996, 1/14.

<sup>10</sup> Sun Tzu, 74.

Japanese government in this environment should be quite simple to sponsor. A few similar attacks on South Korean rice crops near U.S. bases, properly sequenced after the stage has been set in Japan, will begin to undermine the U.S.-ROK unity as well.

This relatively simple action has both strategic and operational impact. The sea lines of communication for American forces will have been lengthened and operating cost drastically increased. The U.S. operational reserve in Japan may be decreased or at best forced to withdraw totally. At the very least, a psychological wedge has been placed between the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK relationships.

Further biological attacks should be employed against South Korean ports<sup>11</sup>. These will also be non-lethal operational fires delivered covertly by special operations forces. The objective is to incapacitate the work force and thereby slow and possibly stop the tempo of the logistic effort supporting the coalition forces. Additionally, the adverse economic effect on the south will help to destabilize the government and further erode public confidence in its competence. The sea lines of communication will have been interdicted further constraining the opposing forces.

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<sup>11</sup> Col (S) Randall Larsen and Robert Kadlec, M.D., Biological Warfare: A Post Cold War Threat to America's Strategic Mobility Forces. RIDGWAY Viewpoints, No. 95-4 (University of Pittsburgh: The Matthew B. Ridgway Center for International Security Studies, 1995, 13.

The biologic agents employed should be a variety of the pathogens normally found on the Korean peninsula. Dispersal of these agents can be accomplished by spraying the aerosolized pathogen from ships as they depart the targeted port. The effect will be seen days to a few weeks later<sup>12</sup>. Several differing types should be used to improve the security of the operation and provide plausible deniability to your nation. The combined effects of the above actions should be adversely affecting your opponent before progressing to the next phase of operations, nuclear.

#### NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The use of nuclear weapons in a direct attack is highly provocative and fraught with dangers for the party initiating the first strike. The sensed danger of general war increases as does the likelihood of decisions that would cause such a total war to occur<sup>13</sup>. Any perceptions of a lack of U.S. will<sup>14</sup> to use nuclear weapons, does not apply if their forces are attacked first with these weapons<sup>15</sup>. Additionally, the DPRK cannot match the numbers and delivery capabilities of U.S. weapons. However, the advantage produced by a nuclear

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<sup>12</sup> David R. Franz, "Biological Toxins," Lecture, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 25 April 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Schelling, Arms and Influence (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1966), 108.

<sup>14</sup> Georgie Anne Geyer, "Temptation of the hegemonic hermit," Washington Times, 11 April 1996, 14.

<sup>15</sup> Schelling, 153.

detonation can be attained without this assured risk of nuclear retaliation.

The deliberate detonation of a second generation 50 kiloton weapon at high altitude over North Korean territory will produce the desired effects and leave the U.S. in a quandary over the option of nuclear retaliation. There will be considerable world-wide outrage for breaking the atmospheric test ban which will include Russia and the Peoples Republic of China. However, this theater-wide Electronic Warfare has the potential for significant operational gains in your favor that should outweigh the negative reaction.

Prior to the detonation, U.S. reconnaissance satellites will have spotted the preparations for your missile launch and they will have focused most if not all of their assets on your activity. Using this as a form of deception, further movement of forces in preparation for attacking the south may go unobserved. Complying with standard missile launch notifications and area closures will only help with the deception. Diplomatic representatives must have knowledge of the nuclear "test" and be prepared to immediately inform their counterparts in the UN, Japan, the U.S. as well as the press.

Your operational situation in relation to your opponents strengths will have just improved. The effects generated by this high altitude burst have extensively disrupted the command, control, communications and intelligence capabilities

of your opponent. These effects establish the foundation for a direct attack on their forces.

The effects to the command and control communications network and the U.S. satellite system will be profound<sup>16</sup>. We suspect that the U.S. strategic command and communications systems will remain intact but this cannot be stated with much assurance for the operational and tactical systems. An unclassified study published by the U.S. predicts damage or destruction to unhardened (to nuclear effects) communications systems, at the company to division levels, over an area greater than one million square kilometers<sup>17</sup>. High frequency (HF) communications will also be disrupted impacting the U.S. Defense Communications System (DCS) which has several links serving Korea from North America<sup>18</sup>. Ground Mobile Forces (GMF) SATCOM will be effected for approximately three hours over the entire Korean peninsula<sup>19</sup>. The U.S. Global Positioning Satellite system will be degraded and may fail completely for the Korean theater<sup>20</sup>. A particularly crucial effect will be felt by the U.S. infrared surveillance satellites which will be blinded from detecting missile

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<sup>16</sup> R.C. Webb and others, "The Commercial and Military Satellite Survivability Crisis," Defense Electronics, August 1995, 21-23.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Defense Nuclear Agency, Region by Region Alexandria, VA: 1992

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> R.C. Webb, 21-23.

launches<sup>21</sup> from North Korea. Additionally, the effects of this nuclear burst are believed to degrade the performance of several other satellite systems and decrease their overall life<sup>22</sup>. The disruptive effect the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) on the electrical distribution grid and the South Korean national communication system<sup>23</sup> will be further disrupt and confuse your opponent.

One can not fail to recognize the impact on the capability of U.S. and ROK forces. The operational surprise of removing an opponents ability to see the battlefield and communicate with his forces is powerful. The stage could not be better for launching an attack across the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ). The population of Seoul will probably contribute to total gridlock of the outbound transportation routes, if the computerized ignition in their vehicles will function after the EMP effect, and cause further degrading of the government's position as well as the movement of opposing forces.

The effect on Japan will also be profound and diplomatic efforts must be immediately launched to capitalize on this. Japan must be compelled to prohibit U.S. forces from staging operational actions against the DPRK from Japan. The

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<sup>21</sup> Defense Nuclear Agency, Region by Region

<sup>22</sup> Webb, 21-23.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of Defense and Department of Energy, The Effects of Nuclear Weapons 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), 522.

demonstration of nuclear capability and the ability of your weapons to reach Japan should compel them to remain neutral<sup>24</sup>. U.S. forces will have lost much of their previous advantage of short lines of operation. Further diplomatic efforts with the U.N. and the U.S. should be exercised to prevent any possible consideration of nuclear retaliation.

#### CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Any attack, conventional or chemical, across the DMZ should be synchronized with the effects of the nuclear detonation to achieve the greatest success. The ability of chemical weapons to reduce the fighting capability of the enemy is estimated to be a significant force multiplier for the initial attack with percentages decreasing thereafter as the forces begin to adjust to the psychological fear associated with these weapons<sup>25</sup>. An effect of this magnitude is intoxicating to the force employing them. However, your own force must also operate in this environment and do so skillfully. If this cannot be assured then consideration must be given not to using them.

Another question that should be addressed is what to target. The use of chemical warheads on scud missiles during the Iran Iraq war targeted troop concentrations and civilians

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<sup>24</sup> Schelling, 71-90.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Assessing the Risks, (Washington: 1993), 52-62; Spiers, 2, 42.



which may not have produced significant operational effects<sup>26</sup>. An attack on U.S. and ROK key decisive points (air bases, anti-aircraft and missile defenses, and command posts) will produce the most benefit. The attacks on ground forces with conventional weapons will benefit from the uncertainty of chemical attack. As a defensive response, the well trained U.S. and ROK ground forces will don protective gear without actually being attacked with chemicals. *Hebi ni kamarote kuchinawa ni ozu -- He who has been bitten by a snake is startled even at a rotten rope.*<sup>27</sup> Their performance will be degraded amplifying the force multiplier effect.

The use of chemical weapons against U.S. and South Korean forces subjects the DPRK to considerable risk of eventual defeat. The U.S. has stated that their response would be "overwhelming and devastating" if attacked with WMD<sup>28</sup>. Although the taboo may have been weakened against the use of chemical weapons<sup>29</sup>, the U.S. not have an economy of national will<sup>30</sup>. The American people will weigh the cost in lives with the benefit of maintaining the South Korean government and the

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<sup>26</sup> Spiers, 16.

<sup>27</sup> Young H. Yoo, Wisdom of the Far East, (Washington: Far Eastern Research and Publication Center, 1972), 31.

<sup>28</sup> Associated Press, "U.S. will annihilate attackers, Perry vows," Washington Times, 19 April 1996, p.6.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Gen. Carl Mundy, "Reflections on the Corps: Some Thoughts on Expeditionary Warfare," Marine Corps Gazette, March 1995, Vol. 79, No. 3, pp 26-29.

unprovoked first strike with chemical weapons to determine their response. Based upon this significant unknown, direct attack on U.S. forces with chemical weapons is not recommended. The use of only conventional weapons for this phase on operations should be considered. However, if adequate time is available, the following course of action is strongly recommended.

**PREFERRED COURSE of ACTION: INDIRECT ATTACK**

**BIOLOGIC WEAPONS**

This COA begins with the same biological attack on the Japanese rice crop. The additional attack on the South Korean crops should be accomplished but attacks on the ports may not be necessary. The drawback of this COA is that it requires considerable time and psychological manipulation to succeed. If U.S. forces can be forced to withdraw from Japan and not move to Korea, the focus of the region will turn to the re-militarization of Japan. The South Korean concern with Japan over possible economic dominance with the North Korean labor force coupled with a regional concern over a re-armed Japan<sup>31</sup> will provide the stimulus for unification negotiations on terms highly favorable to your government.

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<sup>31</sup> U.S. Congressional Research Service, North Korea: Policy Determinants, Alternative Outcomes, U.S. Policy Approaches, (Washington: Library of Congress, 1993), 12-14; Selig S. Harrison, "The Korea Divide," New York Times, 11 April 1996, 25.

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Again the high altitude detonation of a nuclear weapon will create great havoc with the U.S. and ROK forces as well as the civil population. Both South Korea and Japan rely on the nuclear deterrent umbrella provided by the U.S. but they are also aware that current missile defenses are far from fool proof as demonstrated in the post gulf war reports of patriot missile shortcomings. The psychological impact on these two nations now faced with the "irrational" North Korean leadership can be exploited. U.S. Japanese relations are already strained if not broken from the devastation to the rice crop. The visual impact to the Japanese people of a large red fireball<sup>32</sup> rising in the western sky should create conditions near panic and may bring down the present Japanese government. The effect on South Korea will be similar and set in motion the government confusion that will present you with opportunities to negotiate a reunification of Korea from a position of great strength.

The threat of using nuclear weapons and even the attempted development of these weapons elicit extraordinary international efforts to dissipate the threat or deter the development. This international reaction is ripe for exploitation. The recent response to your own nuclear program is an excellent example where the international community led by the U.S. made significant concessions providing light water

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<sup>32</sup> DoD and DOE, Effects of Nuclear Weapons, 47.

reactors as well as fuel oil supplies. The expected international effort to deter the use and abandon the possession of nuclear weapons has even greater possibilities of improving your negotiating position for unification.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Sun Tzu states "in war the best policy is to take the state intact" and "to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill"<sup>33</sup>. Comrade Kim, you have a great opportunity to achieve your objective short of general war. As discussed, you currently have the capability to affect discord between alliances and to coerce nations to act in a favorable manner with relatively little risk. The manipulation of risks employing the indirect method above will have increased the Republic of Korea's will to survive as a people and significantly reduced their will to fight without the full strength of the United States on their side<sup>34</sup>. Presented with this opportunity, Comrade Kim, the indirect course of action should be grasped.

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<sup>33</sup> Sun Tzu, 77-79.

<sup>34</sup> Schelling, 212-215.

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